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*We believe high quality child care and early learning programs provide children with the opportunities to...*

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### **Create**

Environments should allow children the opportunity and flexibility while giving them the freedom to create. Some children may love art, others may love building, while others love pretend play. Children should be provided with large amounts of time to allow creation to occur.

### **Discover**

Why is the sky blue? Why is the grass green? Why do dogs bark and cats meow? Why do you park in a driveway and drive in a parkway? It is easy to give a response..."just because that is how it is." *Life's lessons are learned through discovery.* Environments and educators should be intentional to allow children the opportunity to discover and seek these and other "why" questions out.

### **Explore**

This goes without saying...the sure way you can fail is by not trying. Exploring gives children the "permission" to understand cause and effect in the safety of their environments. Having a barrier of protection in the safety of their known environment helps to build their core...self-concept

### **Play**

As many child development theorists will tell you...learning is playing and playing is learning. Play establishes a foundation to allow higher learning to occur. Play builds social/emotional, cognitive, physical, and language development. Without play, children can't connect their experiences to reality. Discover how creating mud pies, painting, dress-up, and building inspire learning.

### **Build/Develop Friendships**

Social/Emotional skills are the core of a child. By nature children are egocentric. While it is easy to say "please share with your friends" and "our hands are for soft touches," these phrases don't mean a lot to a child who really wants that toy! Creating opportunities to model and demonstrate these skills is essential. Focusing on setting up the environment instead of focusing on the negative behavior, increases the learning opportunities for friendship skills to occur.

### **Build Responsibility**

Responsibility starts with giving children the freedom of choices. When children make choices, they feel proud and important and like a "big kid." Developing responsibility sends a message that they are very important to you and the world they are in.